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THE SCANDINAVIAN CRISIS.

BY H. L. BRAEKSTAD AND KARL STAAFF, MEMBER OF THE SWEDISH
PARLIAMENT.

I.—NORWAY'S RIGHT TO INDEPENDENCE.

ON June 7th the world was somewhat suddenly startled by the news that the Norwegian Parliament had unanimously decided to proclaim the dissolution of the Union with Sweden, and that in consequence King Oscar was deposed as King of Norway.

Thus the Union, which has been so little understood and so greatly misrepresented outside the borders of the two countries, came to an end. And looking back upon its history of ninety-one years, the wonder is that it has lasted so long. It was entered into at a time of stress and trouble, and as events have now only too well proved, it was a most unsatisfactory compact, especially as far as Norway was concerned. In Sweden and Norway alike, much has often been said on social and festive occasions about the great advantages and the many blessings of the Union, and the official and well-to-do classes seem persistently to have worked themselves up into the belief that it really has had such results, although no positive proof could be produced of their existence.

But what does the history of the last ninety years show us? During this period, an abnormally large amount of the time and energy of the nation has been expended in resistance to the continuous attempts of Sweden to extend the bonds of the Union, with the ultimate object, as we are now fully convinced, of obtaining complete supremacy over Norway, directly against the letter and the spirit of the Act of Union; and all this time and energy have been consumed to an incredible extent in the discussion and solution of questions to which it would never have been necessary to devote such labors if the Swedes had not interfered in Norwegian affairs, and, by their influence over the King, delayed the

passing of measures and reforms which the Norwegians, constitutionally, were fully justified in carrying out.

In a short article like the present it will not be possible to enter into the details of the many conflicts that have arisen between the two countries. It will suffice if I refer to the conflicts over the abolition of the Governor of Norway (1852-1873); over the Royal veto (1872-1884); over the bill for the national flag (1893-1898); and now, last of all, over the establishment of separate consuls for Norway (1892-1905). In view of these incidents, I venture to assert that historians and political writers, who may care to study the history of Norway since 1814, must come to the conclusion that measures and reforms passed in the most correct and constitutional manner by the National Assembly of Norway have been delayed and thwarted through undue influence exercised upon the King by his Swedish advisers, and by the aristocratic party, the so-called "*Storsvensker*," in the Upper Chamber of the Swedish Parliament,—a state of affairs to which the Norwegians could not possibly submit indefinitely, particularly when it is remembered that the advisers in question were the representatives of an alien country.

According to the Act of Union, the political relations between the two countries were based upon *absolute equality*, but—to go back to the year 1814,—that was not the kind of Union which the Swedes wanted. One of their leading politicians at the time described it as "a Union to weep over." And, considering the great difference between the two countries, their institutions, the character and aspirations of the two peoples, it was no doubt unwise for them to unite under one king, who would have had to be more than human to be able to act as a constitutional sovereign for both countries. Thus the Swedish Constitution is founded upon the feudal system, while that of Norway is based upon the udal principle. The Swedish Constitution gives the King an absolute veto, the Norwegian only a suspensory one. In Sweden the King may dissolve the Parliament at his pleasure,—a power he does not possess in Norway. The Swedish Parliament consists of an Upper and a Lower Chamber, while the Norwegian is a one-chamber institution. Sweden has a very old-fashioned and limited franchise; in Norway they have now manhood suffrage. Sweden has an aristocracy; Norway has none.

The Union was most unfavorably received by the Swedish

governing classes in particular. The people had little or no idea of the real nature of the Union, and for a considerable time believed it to be an achievement of Swedish arms, while to the leading men of the country, who were better acquainted with its terms, it was a great disappointment. They had hoped to make Norway a province of Sweden, and they found they had entered into a Union in which both countries were to be equally independent.

But the Norwegians soon found that the so-called equality was not fully recognized by the Swedes, and that the latter were ever intent upon assuming the rôle of the predominant partner in the Union. Every demand by Norway for the recognition of her full rights as a free and independent kingdom came to be looked upon by the Swedes as "revolutionary," and as directed against the King and against the Union; and they were only too prone to exclaim that what the Norwegians have gradually succeeded in carrying through during the last ninety years was obtained only through "Swedish magnanimity and concessions." Moreover, according to the Act of Union, Norway had full right to an equal share in the conduct of foreign affairs that concerned Norway; but the policy of Sweden, ever since the time of the Union in 1814, has been to reserve the control of these affairs as much as possible to herself. As late as 1891, the Swedish Government maintained that Norway had no right to participate in the conduct of foreign affairs. There is, however, no paragraph in the Norwegian Constitution, or in the Act of Union, that authorized Sweden to assume the sole control, and Norway, time after time, firmly objected to legalize, by any new Act of Parliament, the pretension that the conduct of foreign affairs should be intrusted to Sweden.

Up to 1885, it was generally understood that the King might call upon a Swedish or a Norwegian Minister to assist him in the conduct of foreign affairs; but, as a matter of fact, the Swedish Foreign Minister had *always* been employed for this purpose. In 1885, however, Sweden, without consulting Norway, decided on a change in her Constitution, by which the conduct of foreign affairs passed entirely into the hands of the Swedes. The Council for the transaction of these affairs was made to consist of the Swedish Foreign Minister and two other members of the Swedish Government on behalf of Sweden, and of the Norwegian

Minister in attendance upon the King at Stockholm on behalf of Norway. This disproportion in the representation of the two countries in the Council was even admitted by the Swedish Government, and several negotiations took place subsequently with regard to giving Norway a greater share in the conduct of foreign affairs, but all without any result.

The particular question upon which the final breach has taken place was the establishment of separate consuls for Norway, which the Norwegians, after careful investigation, had found to be of vital interest to the free development of the shipping and commerce of the country.*

The negotiations between the two Governments in connection with this question had so far progressed satisfactorily that an agreement was arrived at in December, 1903; and the King had commissioned the Norwegian and Swedish Governments to proceed with the drafting of the regulations for the consular service, which were to be submitted to the Parliaments of the two countries for final acceptance. In November last, however, Mr. Boström, the Swedish Prime Minister, suddenly submitted to the Norwegian Government a number of new conditions, under which the Swedish Government was willing to agree to the establishment of separate consuls. According to these proposals, the Norwegian consuls were to be placed under the control of the Swedish Foreign Minister, who was also to have the power of dismissing or removing any Norwegian consul whose conduct he might not approve. This, as well as the other conditions contained in Mr. Boström's proposals, was, of course, altogether unacceptable to the Norwegians. According to the Norwegian Constitution, a Norwegian official can be dismissed or removed only by the Norwegian Crown. The Norwegians, moreover, considered that these new demands, put forward by the Swedish Prime Minister, were nothing less than a breach of faith with regard to the terms of the agreement arrived at two years before by both Governments, and approved and signed by the King. The negotiations, therefore, came to an end, and no other course remained for Norway but to proceed towards the attainment of her constitutional rights in her own way. On February 17th last, the Norwegian Storting decided unanimously to refer the

* The tonnage of the Norwegian merchant fleet is more than double that of Sweden.

matter to a Special Committee, which was to consider what steps should be taken to promote the establishment of Norwegian consuls. This Committee decided that a bill should be immediately submitted to the Storting for that purpose, and that the measure should come into force not later than April 1st, 1906. The bill was passed without a dissentient voice on May 23rd. It was generally expected that the King would sanction the bill and that the long controversy over the consular service would thus be finally settled. But on May 27th, in spite of the earnest entreaties of his Norwegian Ministers that he should sanction the bill, the King formally announced his refusal to do so. The Norwegian Ministers immediately resigned, but as the King was well aware that he would not be able to form a new Ministry prepared to take upon themselves the responsibility of countersigning his refusal to sanction the bill, he at once informed the Ministers that he could not accept their resignation. They, however, declined to withdraw it. No protocol of the proceedings was drawn up, as the Ministers refused to countersign it, and the rejection of the bill by the King was, therefore, constitutionally non-existent.

A few days afterwards, the Norwegian Government formally informed the Storting of the King's refusal. Mr. Michelsen, the Prime Minister, read the minutes of the Council of State on May 27th, whereupon the Assembly unanimously agreed to refer it to the Special Committee. On June 7th the Storting met to hear the final decision of the Government. The Prime Minister read a statement, signed by all the members of the Government, informing the Storting that they had resigned in consequence of the King's refusal to sanction the consular law, that the King had declined to accept their resignation and that, as an alternative Government could not be formed, the Royal power ceased to be operative, and the Union with Sweden, based upon a King in common, was consequently dissolved. The policy involved in the position taken up by the King with regard to the sanction of the consular law was not, in the opinion of the Government, in conformity with the Norwegian Constitution; and, just as no Norwegian would be willing to assist in the formation of a new Government, prepared to take the responsibility for such a policy, the Ministers could not by remaining in office make themselves a party to it. They had informed the King of this, and they considered it their duty to lay down their office.

The President then submitted a resolution, that the Storting should authorize the members of the resigning Ministry to exercise the authority vested in the King in accordance with the fundamental law of the Kingdom of Norway, with such modifications as are necessitated by the fact that the Union with Sweden under one King has been dissolved.

The resolution was unanimously adopted, and a provisional Government was thereupon formally installed. The Storting at the same time agreed upon an address to the King, informing him of its decision, and assuring him that the Norwegian people's struggle and work for the complete independence of their country had not arisen from any animosity against the Royal House or the Swedish people, and, in testimony of this, soliciting His Majesty to allow a Prince of the Swedish Royal House to be elected King of Norway, the Prince being required to renounce his hereditary right to the Throne of Sweden.

The King, on receiving the news of the action of the Storting at his Swedish capital, telegraphed to the Norwegian Prime Minister and to the President of the Storting: "I have received the communication of the Council of State, and record a most decided protest against the method of action of the Government."

The Swedish Government met immediately and decided to summon an extraordinary session of the Swedish Parliament. At the time of writing, the extraordinary Riksdag has just assembled and elected a Special Committee to consider what steps should be taken by Sweden.

Probably never in ancient or modern history has such an important change in the political union between two countries been effected with less demonstration and bluster, and with a greater degree of unanimity, determination, self-control and order, than in the case of that effected by the action of the Norwegian Storting on June 7th last.

This action has by several leading European newspapers been termed a "revolution." This is, of course, entirely incorrect and misleading. When you have a whole nation, from the highest to the lowest in the land, in perfect accord regarding the country's policy on a momentous question, where there is no need to resort to any act of violence in order to accomplish the people's will, and when there is not a vestige of disorder throughout the land, to call any act decided upon by the Government,

backed up by the whole nation, a "revolution" is nothing but a wilful or ignorant misuse of language. It may suit the purposes of the aristocratic party in Sweden to represent the action of Norway to the European public as "revolutionary." But what has actually happened? A bill providing for separate consuls has been passed unanimously by the Norwegian Parliament. According to the Constitution of the country, the King does not possess an absolute veto, but he has the right twice to refuse his sanction to any bill passed by the Storthing. It must, however, be borne in mind that, according to the fifth section of the Constitution, "the *King* cannot be blamed or accused. *The responsibility shall rest upon his Ministers.*" Consequently, the King has no constitutional or other right to refuse his sanction to a bill passed in a constitutional manner, unless he has a Ministry who will support and countersign his refusal, and thereby take the responsibility thereof on their own shoulders. On his accession to the throne of Norway, King Oscar took the following oath before the Storthing: "I promise and swear that I will govern the Kingdom of Norway in accordance with its Constitution and laws, so truly help me God and His holy word."

According to this, King Oscar is clearly bound to act as a constitutional King; and when he cannot find a Ministry to support and countersign his refusal to sanction a bill, he places himself—if he still persists in refusing his sanction—outside the pale of the Constitution and deposes himself as the King of Norway. And when his Ministers have resigned in consequence, and he cannot find a single Norwegian ready to undertake to form a Ministry that will support his action, the country must through its Parliament provide for the constitutional government of the country by appointing a new Ministry.

The Royal veto, according to the Norwegian Constitution, was not granted to the King that he might constitute himself a power above the Constitution and the expressed will of the nation.

What made the matter more serious, and even dangerous, in the eyes of the Norwegians, was the fact, now clearly brought to light, that it was mainly through the Swedish influence, which was brought to bear upon him, as on many previous occasions, that King Oscar, as King of Norway, refused his sanction to the Consular bill; and it would, therefore, have really meant that Norway was being governed from Sweden,—by the opinion of the

aristocratic party there, the known enemies of the free and democratic Constitution of Norway.

The correct term for the action of the Norwegian Storting is rather a "revolt" against the attempts at Swedish supremacy and interference in Norwegian affairs. And now that the nation has given the Government its full confidence, we may rest assured that that confidence will be maintained. Those who have some idea of the character of the Norwegians will know that there will be no wavering or going back, and that the Norwegian people, from the Prime Minister to the humble farm-laborers, are prepared to sacrifice everything in order to uphold the honor and the independence of their country.

H. L. BRAEKSTAD.

II.—THE GROUNDS OF SWEDEN'S PROTEST.

THE Union between Sweden and Norway has, from the very beginning, labored under a contradiction between intention and execution. The intention was that Norway, in the Union, should be on an equality with Sweden in the Union. But this purpose was not entirely carried out. It fell short of realization chiefly with reference to the treatment of foreign affairs. Certain steps have been taken in the course of time to rectify this defect, but with little success. The foreign affairs of Norway were managed by a Swedish Minister responsible only to the Swedish Government. Only by degrees were the eyes of the Swedes opened, as at length they were during the nineties, to the untenable character of these conditions. Meanwhile, a large party had been formed in Norway, which had drawn up a plan for effecting the equality of the two countries, which stood in sharp contrast to the general view of things held in Sweden.

The Swedish reform programme, as it was developed by degrees, was to arrange for a common Minister of Foreign Affairs, a Swede or a Norwegian, who should be responsible to the Governments of both countries (the representatives themselves, or delegates chosen by the representatives). The Norwegian programme was to provide for a duplicate Foreign Ministry, whereby there should be a native of Norway as Minister of Foreign Affairs responsible to the Norwegian Storting, and a native of Sweden as

Minister of Foreign Affairs responsible to the Swedish Riksdag. Each of these Ministers should thus manage the foreign affairs of his own country. Foreign affairs which concerned both countries should be jointly worked out and presented to the King in common. The difference between the two programmes will be seen to be this: the Swedish would maintain complete unity in the management of foreign affairs, whereas the Norwegian programme introduces the principle of dualism in the direction of foreign affairs. The duty of the common Foreign Minister would be to look after the interests of both countries. Each of the two Foreign Ministers would only have the interests of his own individual country at heart. Suppose they should differ and give the King different advice on the same matters? In that case, there would be no other way out of the difficulty than for the King personally to decide, either in accordance with the advice of one or the other Minister, or in conformity with some compromise between their discordant counsels. But such an arrangement would not be in accordance with the principles of the Constitution. The Minister whose advice is not followed cannot be blamed for the consequences. In this way, one of the countries might time after time see the advice of its Minister rejected without being able to do anything in the matter. The consequence must naturally be a great dissatisfaction in that country, and this dissatisfaction must be an influence directed against the Union itself. It is evident that the Swedish programme which requires the common Foreign Minister to consider the interests of both countries and makes him responsible to the representatives of both peoples, offers far greater certainty that each of the countries would exert its proper influence on the foreign administration.

Norway, however, has never, by any direct act, tried to have its programme carried out.

In the first place, the Norwegian programme was, for a long time, embraced by only one of the great Norwegian parties, the party of the "Left," while the party of the "Right" accepted the Swedish programme. In the second place, it is probable that the interpretation of the Constitution upon which Norway's claim was based was, perhaps, considered somewhat questionable. In the early nineties, the Norwegian Storting took another course by trying to organize a Norwegian consular service. This attempt, however, was frustrated by the King's refusal to

sanction it. After a long ministerial crisis, a Union Committee was formed, consisting of representatives from both countries. This Committee, which was relied on to devise a method of settlement, was unable to reach unanimity in its conclusions, but divided into four sections, two Swedish and two Norwegian, each with a different programme; consequently, the work of the Committee was devoid of practical result.

So things went on till 1903, when a proposal was made by the Swedish Government to improve Norway's position. In January, 1902, the King, in a joint Council of State, at the instigation of the Swedish Foreign Minister, had resolved to submit the question of separate consular services to a joint committee of experts from both countries, to consider how an arrangement of separate consuls for each of the Kingdoms, diplomatic representatives being common, would work in practice. After the committee had come to a conclusion, negotiations were opened between the Norwegian and Swedish governments, which resulted in a preliminary agreement on March 24th, 1903. This agreement was to the effect that a settlement should be made on the following basis: . First, separate consular services shall be established. The consuls of each Kingdom shall be placed under whichever department at home the country concerned will decide. Secondly, the relationship between the respective consuls and the Foreign Minister and embassies shall be arranged according to identical laws, which cannot be altered or suspended without the consent of the Executives of both Kingdoms. The Swedish negotiators added that they were fully aware and acknowledged that the position of the Foreign Ministers did not respond to Norway's just claims to equality in the Union. They had suggested the desirability of having this question taken up for discussion, but this had found no sympathy on the Norwegian side. They had, nevertheless, declared themselves ready, whenever a desire to that effect was uttered by Norway, to advise the King to propose to the Riksdag and the Storting such alterations in the Rikssakt as might give the King an opportunity to elect either a Swede or a Norwegian as Foreign Minister.

The Norwegian negotiators had replied that they, of course, agreed that the present state of the management of foreign affairs was not in conformity with Norway's lawful claim to equality in the Union. At the same time, they expressed the hope that the

question of a satisfactory arrangement of the management of foreign affairs might soon be taken up for negotiation between the two Kingdoms. The negotiations on the Norwegian side had been carried on in the belief that the question of a change in the aforesaid disadvantages should be left untouched. It had been, for the reason that the opinions as to the best manner of rectifying this matter were so divergent in the two countries that an agreement could not at that time be expected. In conclusion, it was emphasized on both sides that the identical laws should guarantee that the consuls should not transgress the proper bounds of their activity, and at the same time secure smooth collaboration between the Minister and the consular services of the two Kingdoms. It was at this last point that the whole attempt failed.

As soon as it became known that the Governments could not agree, a violent campaign began in the Norwegian press, especially directed against the Swedish Parliament and Prime Minister. The latter was accused of having broken his promises by not trying to realize what the preliminary agreements of March 24th contained. In February, 1905, it was officially declared that the negotiations had been broken off.

The taking up of the consular question and the preliminary agreement of March 24th had aroused great hopes among the friends of the Union in both countries. Concerning the result and the reasons for it, opinions differed much in Sweden. That the negotiations on the Swedish side had not been properly managed was admitted in many quarters, also that the Swedish demands in many respects were unreasonable. On the other hand, the charges against the Premier were considered excessive, even if it had to be acknowledged, judging from sundry indications, that his interest in the happy solution of the question had waned.

The Norwegians resolved now to take the matter into their own hands. According to Norwegian ideas—and on this point all Norwegians agreed—the consular question was a purely Norwegian concern, so that Norway could without the cooperation of Sweden organize a consular service of her own.

In the spring, the Crown Prince, who during the illness of King Oscar was made Regent, tried to bring up the Union question in all its bearings. He laid proposals before a joint Swedish and Norwegian Council of State, inviting them, on both sides, without bias in favor of already adopted views, immedi-

ately to open free and friendly negotiations for a new arrangement of the matters concerning the Union, which ought to be conducted on the basis of complete equality between the two Kingdoms. The Crown Prince said:

"The course which, I think, ought to be taken, and which may in my judgment lead to a solution of the difficulties, is as follows: Provide for a joint Foreign Minister, Swede or Norwegian, responsible to both Kingdoms, or to a joint institution; a separate consular service for each Kingdom, but so arranged that the consuls, in everything that concerns their relationship to foreign Powers, shall be placed under the direction and control of the Foreign Minister. If during the negotiations another way of arranging foreign affairs should be found, always retaining a unity in their management as an indispensable guarantee of the continuance of the Union, I hereby declare myself prepared to take the course proposed under my earnest consideration."

This last part of the Crown Prince's speech, which mentions "another way," refers to a proposal which had been made on previous occasions, and which in the Second Chamber of the Swedish Parliament seems to have been received with some sympathy. To meet the wishes of the Norwegians as far as possible, there had been thoughts of separating foreign affairs relating to one country from those relating to both, putting Swedish foreign matters into the hands of a Swedish Minister and intrusting Norwegian matters to a Norwegian, while common affairs should be dealt with by a Union Chancellor responsible to the representatives of both countries.

The Norwegian Government declined to accept the Crown Prince's proposal. A Special Committee, chosen by the Norwegian Storting, was soon to report to the Storting a bill for the establishment of a separate consular service. If the programme put forward by the Crown Prince happened to be based on the presupposition that the consular question should be set aside, Norway's agreement to such a proposal would be synonymous with the abandonment of the Norwegian people's unanimous demands that the right that belongs to Norway as a Sovereign State, and which is guaranteed by her Constitution should be at once carried into effect.

When the consular question had been solved, negotiations might take place, but only on two conditions: in the first place, the negotiations would have to embrace also the arrangement proposed on the Norwegian side providing for a separate foreign

administration for each of the two countries; and, in the second place, if the new negotiations should be fruitless, the countries should not fall back upon the *status quo*, but each should then be free to decide the future form of its national existence.

The Swedish Government stated that as the idea of further negotiations had been put aside by Norway, until a separate Norwegian consular service should have been organized, and as, furthermore, the conditions upon which Norway was willing to carry on fresh negotiations in the future were incompatible with the Union and the Rikssakt, negotiations could not be started, with prospects of success, on the basis pronounced by the Crown Prince. The Crown Prince hereupon resolved that, as the Norwegian Government would not accede to a proposal of new negotiations concerning all the pending questions relating to the Union, he could do nothing but approve the pronouncement of his Ministers.

On May 18th the consular bill came up for a vote in one part of the Norwegian Storthing, and on May 24th in the other. Both parts unanimously adopted the bill. On May 27th the King, who had resumed the reins of Government, refused to sanction the bill as implying a change in the community of the consular service, which, in his opinion, could not be altered without a mutual agreement. All the ministers then sent in their resignations, which the King declined to accept.

On June 7th the revolution in Norway took place. The Norwegian Ministers entered the Storthing and announced their intention to send in their resignations. The Storthing then declared that the constitutional monarchy had ceased to officiate in Norway. It authorized the Ministers to conduct the Government, until further notice, in conformity with the Norwegian Constitution and laws, with the alterations which would be necessary after dissolution of the Union with Sweden.

That the Norwegian Storthing, in case of refusal of sanction, would appoint a provisional Government was something for which we were prepared, but it was thought that the matter would end there. It had been supposed that the reasoning would be about as follows: "The country must be governed by a constitutional Government (King and Ministers). If the King, now, in spite of all endeavors, cannot form a Cabinet, and as it is impossible to force any one against his will to become a Minister, the constitutional Government has ceased to exist. But, as the country cannot be

allowed to drift into anarchy, the Storthing must fill the gap in the Constitution. The Storthing must thus appoint a new Government of a provisional character." Had it ended there, the crisis, of course, would have been quite different from what it was. The Storthing then would not have deposed the King, but would have only provided a Government for the country so long as the King was unable to reign. The Storthing would not have totally broken, but simply *de facto* suspended, the Union with Sweden. An interregnum would have been formed, and it might even have been open to question whether this interregnum should be called revolutionary or not. If everything that is outside the Constitution is revolutionary, then such a condition of things might be called so too. But if only such acts as are intended to change the Constitution for the future deserve to be called revolutionary, then the measure taken would not have been revolutionary. It would only have been an emergency-expedient pending the coming of an opportunity to reenter lawful Government in one way or another. Such a reentrance into legal conditions would have been possible if both Swedes and Norwegians had proved sufficiently accommodating to speedily reorganize the Union on the basis of complete equality. In that way, it would have been also possible if the Storthing and Government had presented to the Swedish authorities a request for the dissolution of the Union in a lawful manner. As a complete surprise came the message that the Storthing had gone far beyond appointing a provisional Government; that it had deposed the King and declared the Union dissolved. The Norwegians have justified their course by the plea that, after the Swedish Government's refusal of the Norwegian proposal of admitting jointly, with the negotiations as to a new regulation of the Union, the right of dissolution, there did not seem to be any possibility of effecting an amicable separation from Sweden. Against this it may be claimed, however, that, after the King's refusal, the whole state of affairs was quite altered, and demands from the Norwegian Storthing and Government to have the Union dissolved would have had more strength and weight than the suggestion of the Storthing here before quoted.

The correct and best-founded explanation of the revolutionary resolution of the Storthing is this. During the whole existence of the Union, there have been groups and opinions in Norway which

have never looked upon it with good-will. Through the disagreements which have arisen, these parties have grown in strength and number; and even if one cannot regard "the Left" party in Norway as having been totally against the Union, it can justly be said that it has been indifferent and in a degree also inimical towards the Union. The disappointment regarding the consular question naturally fostered a disposition favorable to the plans against the Union. And so it all came to happen.

In its revolutionary action, Norway, it seems to me, has disregarded two great objects, which the small States, before all, ought to hold sacred. One is comity between the two peoples. If the idea of drawing the two nations to each other in a spirit of unity and fraternity is to assume real shape, then they should not proceed in such a brutal manner as that in which the Norwegian revolution was accomplished. The other object is the friendly association of peoples and nations. If one dreams of a great association of peoples—and there are many who dream thus in Norway—even, perhaps, of a "United States" of Europe—it is not the right way to realize such an aspiration, to begin by dissolving a Union of ninety years' standing between two small peoples, who truly need each other far more than Norway needs her consuls.

A few years pass swiftly in the lives of the nations. And that the Union could have been founded on the basis of complete equality within a very short time, once the principle had been duly recognized by the Swedish Government, is beyond all doubt, provided, however, that the Norwegians had agreed to the necessary community in the management of the foreign affairs, with some restrictions upon complete independence. All effective associations require always some restrictions upon complete independence. The great desire of far-seeing persons in both countries is, however, after what has happened, that the chasm between the two nations may not be irremediably widened. These two peoples are destined to live on the same peninsula. They must, therefore, in spite of all, try to remain friendly. It is to be expected that some time will pass full of coldness and bitterness; but should these feelings continue to an indefinite future in the hearts of the two nations, then their unhappy fate is sealed.

KARL STAAFF.